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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

NEWS
LeBron James will play for new team
p5

SCIENCE
Secret to solving Wordle
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Which pets are more helpful?
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Making sense of the world

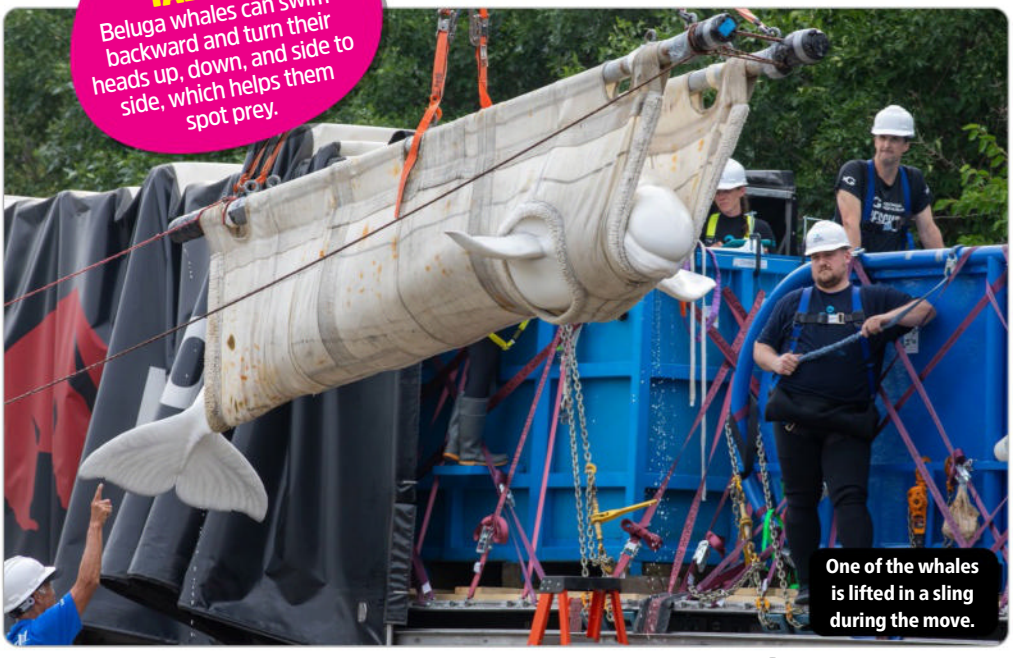
THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

YELLOWSTONE

Explore the stunning sights in America's first national park p12

TERRIFIC TALENTS
Beluga whales can swim backward and turn their heads up, down, and side to side, which helps them spot prey.



One of the whales is lifted in a sling during the move.

Beluga whale fact file

- **LIFESPAN:** Up to 60 years in the wild
- **SIZE:** Up to 3,500 pounds and up to 18 feet long
- **HABITAT:** The Arctic Ocean and nearby waters
- **DIET:** Fish, shrimp, and other shellfish
- **FUN FACT:** Belugas are born dark gray and turn white after five to 12 years.

Massive relocation of beluga whales

On July 21, six beluga whales were transported from Marineland, a marine park in Canada that had shut down, to aquariums in the US. It was the first stage of what wildlife experts are calling an "unprecedented" rescue effort. Ultimately, 30 whales will be moved.

Why was this necessary?

Marineland closed to the public in 2024 after accusations of mistreating animals, which the park denied. Since then, 30 beluga whales, four dolphins, and a few other animals have been living at the facility in Niagara Falls, Ontario, which relied on donations to pay for their care. When the money began running out, park officials said they could no longer care for the belugas without government support and would have to euthanize (humanely kill) them. To prevent that from happening, the government approved a plan in January 2026 to move the whales to the US. In July, the US issued an emergency permit allowing the move. The belugas can't be released into the ocean because they were born and raised in captivity.

An expert greets a beluga at Shedd.

What happened on July 20 and 21?

The six belugas, ranging in age from 6 to about 40, were first examined by veterinarians at the park in Canada to ensure that they were healthy enough to travel. After being cleared, they departed Marineland on July 20 and arrived in the US the next day. Four of the whales—Acadia, Osiris, Sierra, and Lillooet—traveled 500 miles from Niagara Falls to Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, Illinois. Belugas are highly social animals who rely on relationships with other whales for comfort. The four whales already had a strong bond with one another and were chosen to live together at Shedd. Two others, a tightly bonded pair named Frank and Bertie Botts, flew more than 1,500 miles from Canada to SeaWorld San Antonio in Texas.

How were the whales moved?

Belugas can weigh up to 3,500 pounds, and moving them was a major challenge. Animal-care specialists from Marineland, Shedd Aquarium, SeaWorld, Georgia Aquarium, and Mystic Aquarium in Connecticut began planning the relocation in January. On the day of the move, dozens of experts and workers were on-site to make sure the operation went smoothly and to keep the whales safe. To transport the animals, workers wrapped each one in a sling. The sling was then attached to a crane, which lifted the whale up and placed it into a specially designed container filled with cold water and fitted with a waterproof liner and soft padding. The containers were rolled onto trucks for a two-hour drive to the airport, then loaded onto a plane for their flight to the US. To protect the belugas, the trucks moved slowly and carefully to avoid steep inclines, and the plane avoided taking off or landing at too sharp an angle. The whales were accompanied on the journey by veterinarians and aquarium specialists.

How did people react?

Workers at Shedd and SeaWorld became emotional as the belugas arrived. "It's a magical, soaring experience," said Steve Aibel of SeaWorld, who traveled with Frank and Bertie Botts. "This moment marks the next chapter for these rescued belugas," Shedd's lead veterinarian, Karisa Tang, said in a statement. She said her team was focused on "getting to know these whales" and offering them the best care. Wildlife activists said more needs to be done to protect animals in captivity and prevent them from being used as entertainment.

What will happen next?

The belugas are settling into their new habitats while officials plan the relocation of the 24 whales remaining at Marineland. Currently, 22 are set to be moved to Shedd, Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta, and SeaWorld in San Diego, California. Two are expected to go to an aquarium in Spain. No plans to move the other animals have been announced.

France and Spain battle wildfires

Wildfires have burned more than 399,000 acres of land in France and Spain, destroyed hundreds of homes, and forced more than 300,000 people to evacuate. The fires began in early July and are the most devastating in recent history for both countries. They follow heat waves that dried out vegetation, making the land more likely to burn.

The largest fire in Spain has burned more than 190,000 acres of land near Madrid, the country's capital. In France, the worst fire is in the Gironde region, in the southwestern part of the country, near the city of Bordeaux. It has devastated more than 103,000 acres of land—an area about four times the size of Paris, the French capital.

Tens of thousands of firefighters were battling the blazes as shelters were set up and emergency workers helped people who were evacuated. The European Union and other countries sent firefighting aircraft and personnel to help. As *The Week Junior* went to press on July 29, crews were working to get the fires under control before another expected heat wave began.

Firefighters near Bordeaux, France

GLOBAL TREASURES
Italy has the most World Heritage sites of any country, with 62, followed by China, with 61.

The Teatro Serpente Aureo in Offida, Italy, is one of the new sites.

Sites added to World Heritage List

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has added 25 cultural and natural sites to its World Heritage List. The agency, run by the United Nations (a group of 193 countries working together), said the sites were chosen for their "outstanding universal value" to humanity. The list urges conservation and preservation of the chosen sites.

Cultural landmarks added this year include the D-Day beaches in Normandy, France, where Allied forces landed in 1944. The military invasion led to the end of World War II (1939–1945). Other new sites include the Aalto Works in Finland, a group of buildings designed by architect Alvar Aalto that helped shape 20th-century architecture. Historic theaters in central Italy that made performances accessible to local communities were also added.

Newly added natural landscapes include the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Located in southeastern Georgia and northeastern Florida, the large ecosystem (group of plants and animals that affect one another) is important to biodiversity. Greece's Mount Olympus, known in Greek mythology as the home of the gods, was recognized for its cultural and natural importance.

The World Heritage List now includes 1,273 sites in a total of 173 countries. The designation attracts tourists and encourages countries to care for and protect these important places for future generations. "Culture remains a living force that brings people together, enriches societies, and serves as a powerful driver of sustainable development," Khaled El-Enany, the head of UNESCO, said in a statement.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A FABULOUS FIND

Quinn Brown, age 19, paid $3.07 for a vintage Los Angeles Lakers warm-up jacket at a thrift store—and sold it for $89,600 at an auction. It belonged to basketball great Wilt Chamberlain in the 1970s. "I got very, very lucky," Brown said.

The jacket

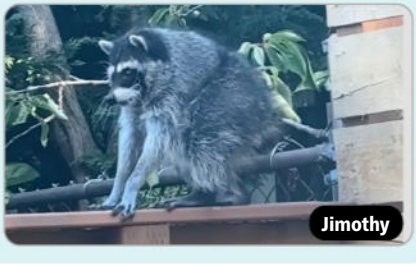
The DVD library

BRINGING BACK A CLASSIC

Before streaming took over in the 2010s, people rented movies at video stores like Blockbuster. Anthony Szewczyk is bringing that back in New York with a Little Free Blockbuster box, where people can give and take DVDs. He said, "This has brought a lot of our community together."

BECOMING A STAR

Jimothy, a wild raccoon with a curved spine and a plucky nature in Seattle, Washington, has gone viral. There are bobbleheads, a mural, and memes in his honor, and fans are calling it "Jimothy Summer." Asked why he's so popular, one local official said the little guy is a reminder that "you don't have to be perfect to be loved."



Jimothy

ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES (3); THE NEW YORK TIMES COMPANY; ON THIS PAGE: FONDAZIONE MARCHE CULTURA; GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S; ADAM BEAM/WKBW; DMITRIY ISHIMSKIY VIA STORYTUL; ON LEFT PAGE: GEORGIA AQUARIUM; SHEDD AQUARIUM; HEIDI ZEIGER; GETTY IMAGES

DID YOU KNOW?
California and Arizona are the two states in the US that produce the most lettuce.

Iceberg lettuce has been identified as a likely source of infections.

Buying local

Although a CBS News/YouGov poll found that 40% of Americans are buying or eating less produce because of the Cyclospora outbreak, many farmers' markets reported a surge in demand for locally grown food. A Michigan vendor told a news station that his lettuce sold out before the market opened on July 25.

Foodborne illness spreads in US

An outbreak of a foodborne illness called cyclosporiasis has spread to at least nine US states. The illness is caused by Cyclospora cayetanensis, a microscopic parasite (species that lives in or on another species). An investigation has linked some of these infections to iceberg lettuce.

What causes the illness?

The Cyclospora parasite is found in human waste. If infected waste comes into contact with food or water, those can become contaminated. If people eat or drink the contaminated product, they may develop cyclosporiasis. Symptoms, which usually begin one to two weeks after infection, include an upset stomach and diarrhea. The illness can last a few days to more than a month. Most people get better on their own. Previous outbreaks have been linked to raspberries, herbs, and mesclun greens.

What happened?

Health officials in Michigan first identified the current outbreak on June 29. Investigators traced the likely source of some infections to shredded iceberg lettuce from Taylor Farms, a company that chops and bags produce in Mexico and ships it to US grocery stores and restaurants, including Taco Bell. By July 17, with cases confirmed in five states, Taylor Farms recalled all iceberg lettuce processed at its central Mexico facility, and Taco Bell removed the affected produce from its restaurants. A week later, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the US health protection agency) said infections had been discovered in four more states, with nearly 2,000 cases confirmed and thousands more under investigation. At least 98 people have been hospitalized. No deaths have been reported.

What is the latest guidance?

Food safety experts say it's safer to buy locally grown produce (see box above) and whole heads of lettuce rather than pre-chopped, bagged salads. They advise washing hands and food prep surfaces and rinsing fruits and vegetables, which does not always remove Cyclospora but can reduce the risk. Heating food to 158º F kills the parasite, so experts recommend that people with a weakened immune system stick to eating cooked produce during the outbreak. Authorities say anyone who has diarrhea for more than two days should contact a doctor.

What will happen next?

Officials will continue to investigate, monitor cases, and improve food safety. Experts say the outbreak is likely to end gradually. Cyclosporiasis infections typically peak in summer and drop by late August.

WORD OF THE WEEK

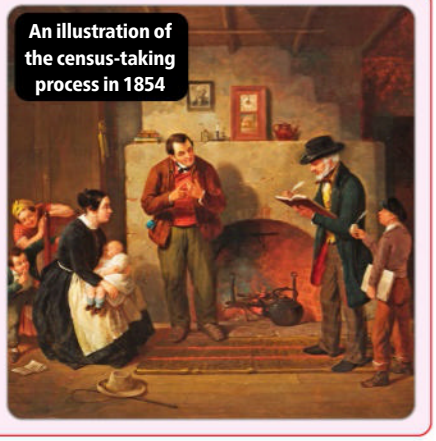
JOKE

The word "joke" has always been about laughter. Its roots are in the Latin *jocus*, which meant a jest or funny wordplay. It became part of 17th-century English slang before it settled into standard English to mean a prank or a story with a funny punchline.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

August 2, 1790
First US census is conducted

On August 2, 1790, the US began conducting its first-ever census, the official count of the nation's population, which happens every 10 years and is required by the US Constitution (nation's highest law). The 1790 census found that there were 3,929,625 people living in the country. The most recent census in 2020 found that there were about 331 million people in the US.



An illustration of the census-taking process in 1854

Hong Wang

Top math medals awarded

The 2026 Fields Medals, a prestigious award given every four years to the world's best math scholars under age 40, were announced at the International Congress of Mathematicians, held in Philadelphia. Recipients included John Pardon of the US and Hong Wang, a New York University professor from China, who is the third woman ever recognized with the honor. The other winners were Yu Deng of China and Jacob Tsimerman of Canada.

The bridge

New bridge to Canada opens

On July 27, traffic opened on a six-lane bridge between Detroit, Michigan, and Windsor, Ontario, in Canada. The Gordie Howe International Bridge, named for Canadian hockey player Gordie Howe (1928–2016), spans about 1.5 miles and is expected to make trade between the US and Canada faster and less costly. Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer was one of the first to ceremonially cross it.

David Jonsson

Black Panther actor is named

Actor David Jonsson has been cast as Prince T'Challa II in the Marvel blockbuster franchise *Black Panther*. The prince will take on the alter ego of the Black Panther, like his father, T'Challa, previously played by Chadwick Boseman, who died in 2020. Director Ryan Coogler made the announcement at Comic-Con in San Diego, California. *Black Panther 3* is set to open in December 2028.

LeBron James

LeBron James makes major move

Basketball star LeBron James, who is regarded as one of the greatest players in the history of the NBA (National Basketball Association), announced on July 24 that he will play for the Philadelphia 76ers next season. The addition of James has made the 76ers one of the favorites to win the 2027 NBA championship.

James, age 41, has spent 23 seasons in the NBA, the most of any player in history, and he is the league's all-time leading scorer. He clinched NBA championships in 2012 and 2013 with the Miami Heat, 2016 with the Cleveland Cavaliers, and 2020 with the Los Angeles Lakers. James is the only NBA player to earn the Finals MVP (Most Valuable Player) award with three different franchises, and he has won four league MVP awards. In 2024, he and his son LeBron James Jr. became the first father and son to play together in an NBA game.

After spending eight seasons with the Lakers, James' contract with the team ended after the 2025–26 NBA season, and he notified the team that he wouldn't be returning. He became a free agent, which meant he could sign with any NBA team. He said he considered retiring but instead signed with the 76ers because he felt they offered him a strong chance at winning another NBA championship. "I still want to sacrifice," James said. "I still want to work."

The 76ers logo

Since he made his announcement, ticket prices for 76ers games have risen sharply. Philadelphia Eagles football star Saquon Barkley welcomed James to the city on social media. A famous Philadelphia restaurant, Pat's King of Steaks, renamed one of its sandwiches in James' honor, and Pennsylvania governor Josh Shapiro declared July 24 to be "LeBron James Day."

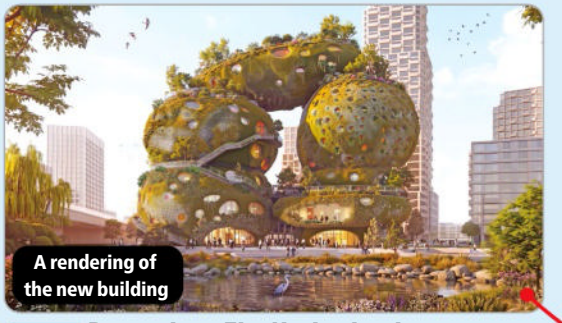
In August, the NBA is expected to announce the new season's schedule, which will likely begin in October. "I am so excited to energize a new fan base and start this incredible journey," James said.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Mystery emu on the loose in Mississippi" ***UPI***

GETTY IMAGES (4); SIMONS FOUNDATION AND IMU; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Around the world


A rendering of the new building

Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Winning building design unveiled

A futuristic design is the winner in an architecture competition that sought proposals for an organization's new headquarters in Rotterdam. The new building, to be built for the Shift Foundation, will be made of boulder-like forms covered in plants for wildlife to inhabit. Inside, there will be a gallery, a hotel, a restaurant, and event spaces. The design is called "Rotterdam Rocks!," and the building is expected to be finished in 2032.

A proposed Euro bill

Frankfurt, Germany
Paper money to be redesigned

The European Central Bank, which has its headquarters in Frankfurt, is asking Europeans to vote on a redesign of the paper money of their currency, the Euro. Citizens can choose from 10 designs within two themes: "arts and culture," showing people like scientist Marie Curie, or "rivers and birds," featuring birds such as the white stork. The new designs will be selected by the end of 2026 and go into circulation a few years later.

The dish

Iquitos, Peru
Rice dish breaks record

Guinness World Records announced that a community in the Amazon has created the largest Peruvian rice cake of all time. To make the dish, called Juane, volunteers combined more than 661 pounds of rice, 2,000 eggs, and 1,000 pieces of chicken with spices and olives, then wrapped the mixture in *bijao* (tropical plant) leaves. The record-breaking meal weighed 1,638 pounds.

Spøttrup, Denmark
Medieval competition held

Nearly 600 people gathered near Spøttrup Castle from July 23–26 for the International Medieval Combat Federation's world championship. The annual event features one-on-one and group battles with up to 16 people per side. Competitors wield medieval-era weapons like swords and axes with blunted edges for safety.

A battle

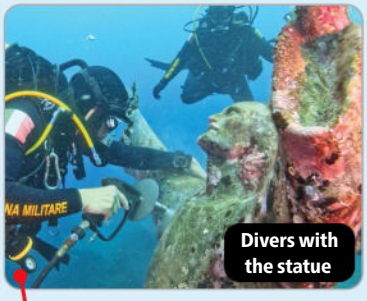
Karamoja, Uganda
Food aid begins

The Ugandan government has begun providing emergency food relief to help people suffering from extreme hunger. More than 10,000 tons of food will be distributed in the next two months. About 1.5 million Ugandans are facing food shortages, and at least 19 people have died from starvation in the Karamoja region in northeastern Uganda. The food shortage has been caused by a drought (long period without rain).

Food arrives.

GETTY IMAGES (2); EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK; MINISTRY OF FOOD AND DRUG SAFETY; GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS; CHRIST OF THE ABYSS; MVKDJV; AP (2); PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, UGANDA

Around the world


Divers with the statue

San Fruttuoso, Italy
Divers clean statue

A famous underwater statue has received its annual cleaning from specialized divers with Italy's police, military, and emergency services. The bronze Christ of the Abyss statue, which honors those who have died at sea, has stood off the coast of San Fruttuoso, Italy, since 1954. The divers used pressurized water hoses to clear away algae.

Floodwaters in Assam

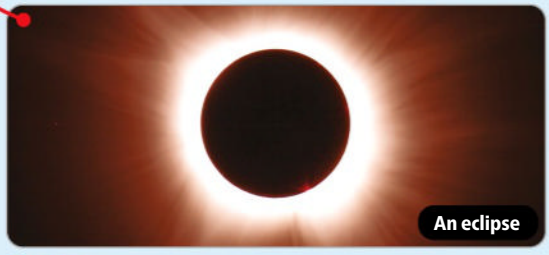
Assam, India
Heavy rain causes flooding

The northeast Indian state of Assam has been hit by severe flooding, which damaged homes, farms, and public buildings. Hundreds of people were injured, and about 700,000 people were forced to leave their homes. At least 68 people died. The main cause of the flooding was heavy rain in the mountains of Nagaland, a region with several rivers that flow into Assam. Officials are coordinating rescue efforts and providing shelter.

The topping

South Korea
Restaurant goes to court for serving ants

The owner of an expensive restaurant has been taken to court for serving sorbet with a topping of dried ants. He could face up to a year in jail or be ordered to pay a $13,742 fine. The country's government has approved 10 insect species, including grasshoppers, for human consumption, while other insects, like ants, require special approval from authorities. The court's decision is expected to be announced in September.

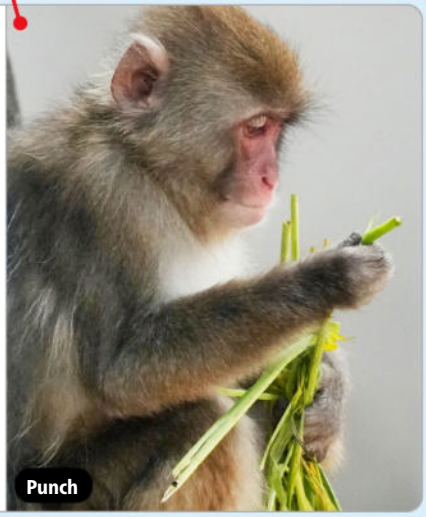

An eclipse

Dunedin, New Zealand
Tourists plan for eclipse

People are making reservations at hotels in Dunedin up to two years ahead as they plan to visit the area's first total solar eclipse in more than 850 years. A solar eclipse is when the Moon moves in front of the Sun, blocking the light it sends to Earth. At 4:17 p.m. on July 22, 2028, scientists predict the Moon will cast a shadow over Dunedin for about three minutes.

Ichikawa, Japan
Birthday wishes

People worldwide sent messages to Ichikawa City Zoo as it celebrated the birthday of a special monkey. Punch, a Japanese macaque, went viral online earlier this year for hugging a stuffed orangutan while struggling to bond with other macaques at the zoo. Now a healthy, social monkey, Punch turned 1 year old on July 26. Fans sent about 2,500 cards wishing him a happy birthday and sharing what he means to them. The zoo has displayed the messages in an exhibit.


Punch

Should we close the postal service?

Some people say the agency is outdated, while others think it's a lifeline.

What you need to know

- **In the 1750s, Benjamin Franklin, a founder of the US, oversaw a courier system that carried mail within the 13 American colonies.**
- **In 1775, an independent postal system was set up, with Franklin as the first postmaster general.**
- **The Post Office Act of 1792 made the system a part of the US government.**
- **In 1971, the service was renamed the United States Postal Service (USPS) and became financially independent of the government.**

SPECIAL DELIVERY
In the 1800s and 1900s, dog sleds and reindeer were used to deliver mail in some remote towns in Alaska.

From horse-drawn wagons carrying handwritten letters to an electric truck fleet hauling piles of packages, the USPS has come a long way. That's no surprise given that the postal service is older than America itself and has played a major role in building the nation. Today, the USPS serves about 169 million addresses and operates more than 30,000 retail locations across the country. But some people feel the history and reach of the USPS are not good reasons to keep it going. They argue that there are faster, more efficient ways to communicate, like email and texting, and the postal service is behind the times. What do you think? Should we close the postal service?

Yes—it's already struggling

The postal service is more than 250 years old and is simply not as relevant as it once was. Most people write emails or messages instead of letters and use online banking instead of mailing checks or money orders. Plus the system is struggling financially. The USPS has to fund itself through sales of stamps and services. But the agency lost $9.5 billion in 2025, and the postmaster general recently said that it will run out of cash by 2027 unless changes are made. The service has also been heavily criticized. Residents of many cities and towns have reported long and frustrating delays in getting their mail.

No—it's still important

The USPS has to deliver to every US address, no matter how remote, at the same cost. FedEx and UPS don't have to do that. About 57% of post offices are in rural areas, where USPS may be the only option, and shutting down the agency would affect those residents the most. While traditional letter-writing may be less frequent, the volume of packages has increased. Without the USPS, it would be harder or more expensive to shop online. The USPS also provides community services beyond mail delivery, like issuing stamps featuring important people and events, processing passport applications, and letting people vote by mail.

YES Three reasons we should close the postal service

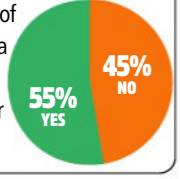
1. **Emails, texts, and other messaging options have made the postal service irrelevant.**
2. **The USPS is supposed to make enough money to sustain itself, but it doesn't—so there's no point in keeping it.**
3. **It's not operating very well in some parts of the country, with many people reporting mail and package delays.**

NO Three reasons we should not close the postal service

1. **The USPS is required to deliver to every address in America at the same cost, and no other carrier can match that service.**
2. **Many rural communities depend on the postal service, which is often the only carrier that will deliver to them.**
3. **The post office serves a broader role in the community that can't be replaced.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if the Moon should have its own time zone. It was a close vote, with just over half of you favoring a single time zone for lunar explorers.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think we should close the postal service or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

A voice that gets laughs

Eric Bauza continues to bring his childhood love of cartoons to life.

Award-winning actor Eric Bauza has voiced hundreds of animated characters in films, TV shows, and video games. Now he's voicing more than 10 characters from the Looney Tunes franchise in the film *Coyote vs. Acme*. The animated live-action comedy, which follows Wile E. Coyote as he sues the Acme Corporation over its famously faulty gadgets, opens in theaters on August 28.

The new film

Growing up in Toronto, Canada, Bauza loved cartoons. He learned to draw characters by pausing videotapes and copying what he saw on the screen. In high school, he entertained classmates with his impressions of popular TV characters. He later studied radio, TV, and film at Centennial College. During an internship, he was invited to voice a character in an animated show, which ended up launching his career.

Bauza's first major role came in 2007 as Rodolfo Rivera in Nickelodeon's *El Tigre: The Adventures of Manny Rivera*. In 2011, he joined the Looney Tunes franchise as the voice of Marvin the Martian and went on to become the official voice of Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck, among others. Bauza has won two Children's & Family Emmy Awards for his Looney Tunes roles, plus an Emmy for his voice work on *Teen Titans Go!*

When asked which of his characters he'd like to spend time with, Bauza told *The Week Junior* he'd enjoy learning pranks from Bugs Bunny. "It would be a master class in outdoing your best frenemy," he said.

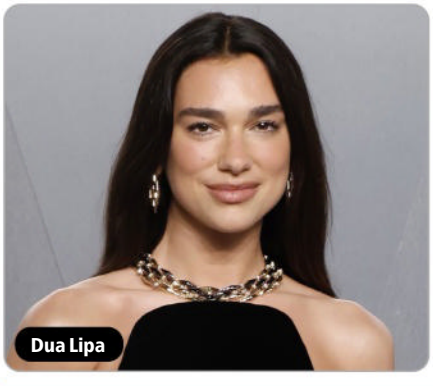
He added that he hopes *Coyote vs. Acme* inspires a new generation of viewers to check out classic Looney Tunes cartoons and "fall in love with the characters the same way that I did."

Eric Bauza

ANIMATION HISTORY
Looney Tunes legend Mel Blanc (1908–1989) voiced more than 1,000 cartoon and radio characters, including Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck.

Singer opens library

Global pop star Dua Lipa has opened a library in Portugal that features 100 books that have been banned, censored, or challenged by people or groups worldwide. The Manifesto Library promotes people's freedom to choose what they read, and it's the first physical home of the Service95 Book Club, an online reading community that Lipa founded in 2023 to celebrate diverse writers. Lipa wrote on social media that the Manifesto Library is for "readers who refuse to be told what book they're allowed" to read.

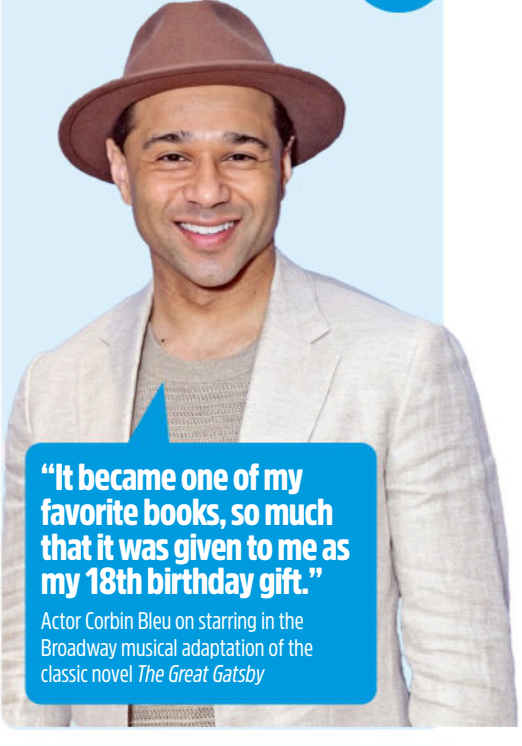

Dua Lipa

Linda Cohn

A trailblazing career

Sports broadcaster Linda Cohn has retired from ESPN after 34 years with the network. Cohn joined ESPN's signature program, *SportsCenter*, in 1992 and has since hosted more than 5,500 episodes—more than any other broadcaster in ESPN history. In 2017, she was inducted into the National Sports Media Association Hall of Fame and honored for paving the way for women in media. Cohn said she is most proud of seeing "little girls grow up watching *SportsCenter*, enter this business, and succeed in it." Next, she plans to launch a podcast about sports and culture.

OVERHEARD


"It became one of my favorite books, so much that it was given to me as my 18th birthday gift."

Actor Corbin Bleu on starring in the Broadway musical adaptation of the classic novel *The Great Gatsby*

GETTY IMAGES (4); WARNER BROS. ANIMATION

Some pets are naturally more helpful than others.

Dogs want to help, but cats don't

Often called "man's best friend," dogs are famous for their willingness to please people, while cats are generally thought to be more standoffish. A new study reveals the truth in these reputations—dogs are more interested in helping humans than cats are.

The study involved 38 untrained pet dogs, 22 pet cats, and 19 human toddlers. In the experiment, a human caregiver would start looking for an object, such as a sponge or a toy, that had been hidden in a location where the test subject could easily see it. The caregiver said things like, "Oh no, I can't find it!" but never directly asked the subject for help.

DAY AND NIGHT

Dogs tend to be most active and playful during the day, while cats are more likely to play at dawn, dusk, or night.

All the dogs, cats, and toddlers paid attention to their caregiver or looked at the hidden object during the search. Researchers watched them to see if they would make an effort to help the person find it.

Among both the dogs and the children, more than 75% showed an interest in helping the person find the object. Many gestured toward the object's location or went to retrieve it for their companion, even though they received no reward for doing so.

Cats, on the other hand, were unlikely to help the human find the sponge. When researchers hid a cat toy or treat, however, many of the cats approached the object or indicated its location. This suggests that cats choose to get involved in the situation only when they can personally benefit from helping someone.

Researchers believe that this difference in behavior comes from the ways dogs and cats evolved (changed slowly over time). Dogs' ancient ancestors were highly social animals that lived in cooperative packs. Canines have also spent thousands of years living and working alongside humans as domesticated (tamed) companions, so they are naturally inclined to want to help us.

Meanwhile, cats' ancestors were solitary creatures. Felines eventually chose to live near humans on their own but did not become as closely interconnected with us. Experts say cats are not being "mean" when they don't help out. They're just being independent.

Another attentive animal

A goat

Goats can follow human vocal cues to find food, a new study has found. When a human sat near an empty bucket but spoke excitedly toward a different bucket filled with food, goats were more likely to go to the bucket that had the food. They seemed to be able to follow the direction of the person's voice.

Experts think this skill is linked to domestication, the process by which wild plants or animals become adapted to living with people. Goats have been domesticated for about 10,000 years. Dogs have also shown the ability to follow the direction of a human voice. But chimpanzees, which were never domesticated, have not.

A HOME FOR SHARKS
French Polynesia has about 30 shark species, including tiger sharks and hammerheads.

Bora Bora in French Polynesia

More protection for marine area

French Polynesia has announced plans to give the highest level of protection to another 200,000 square miles of its ocean territory, an area about the size of France.

French Polynesia is made up of about 118 islands. Its waters and coral reefs support sharks, whales, sea turtles, sea birds, and more than 1,000 fish species, including many animals that are found nowhere else on Earth. The world's largest marine protected area, covering about 1.9 million square miles, is already located in the region. Laws restrict how much fishing can take place there, and some destructive activities, such as deep-sea mining, are banned.

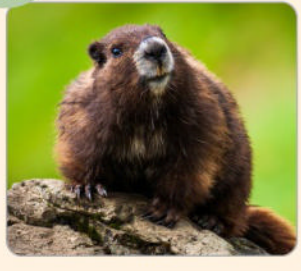
In areas that have the highest level of protection, the rules are even stricter and almost all human activity is banned. (Traditional fishing is still allowed in some places, and local people can use fishing poles and lines on small boats.) The latest plan increases the area with the highest level of protection to about 540,500 square miles. This brings the world closer to achieving "30 by 30," a global goal to protect at least 30% of the planet's land and oceans by 2030.

Animal of the week: Wire-tailed manakin

Research on wire-tailed manakins and four other species revealed that unlike most birds, manakins adapted to be able to taste and easily digest sugar from fruit. This gives them energy to do moves like spins and backflips in their courtship displays.

- **LIFESPAN:** 5 to 10 years in the wild
- **HABITAT:** Forests and swamps in the Amazon
- **SIZE:** About 4.5 inches
- **DIET:** Small fruits and insects
- **FUN FACT:** Males perform synchronized dances with another male in order to attract mates.

Good week / Bad week



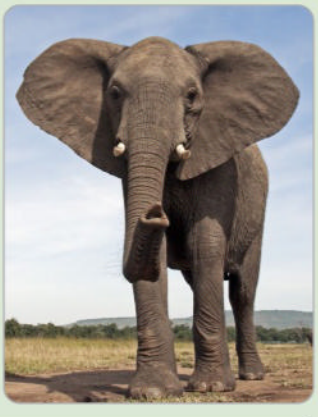
Marmots
As part of a special breeding program, four marmots have been released onto Mount Washington on Vancouver Island, Canada. In 2003, about 30 Vancouver Island marmots remained in the wild, but now there are about 400.

Ibiza wall lizards
These lizards, native to islands in the Mediterranean Sea, are being attacked by horseshoe snakes, an invasive predator. The snakes are harmless to humans but feed on the small lizards, which are an endangered species.

ASK AN EXPERT: "How do elephants have such good memories?"

Max, 11, Maryland

Kelsey Forbes
Curator of mammals, Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium



Elephants have the largest brains of any land mammal. The parts of their brains that store emotions and memories are highly developed, enabling them to live in amazing social groups and pass knowledge—like where to find food and water during droughts—from generation to generation.

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium at pittsburghzoo.org.

RODOLPHE HOLLER; GETTY IMAGES (3); ALAMY; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

America's first-ever

Discover the history and beauty of Yellowstone National Park.

Featuring stunning landscapes and diverse wildlife, Yellowstone inspired the US to protect its natural treasures.

Old Faithful

Spectacular sights

Yellowstone National Park covers about 3,500 square miles and features active geysers and other geologic wonders. Approximately 96% of the park is in Wyoming, with about 3% in Montana and the remaining 1% in Idaho. The park sits on top of a supervolcano and has over 10,000 thermal features, including hot springs, mudpots (pools of bubbling mud), and geysers. Old Faithful, one of about 500 geysers in the park, is among the most popular natural wonders. The park's other geologic features include forests, waterfalls, and grasslands. Its largest body of water is Yellowstone Lake, which has a surface area of 132 square miles.

A drawing of an 1800s expedition

History of Yellowstone

Humans lived in Yellowstone as early as 14,000 years ago. Indigenous people hunted, fished, extracted volcanic glass for making tools, and used thermal sites for ceremonial and medicinal purposes. In 1871, geologist Ferdinand Vandeveer Hayden led a historic expedition in Yellowstone. He presented his findings to Congress to persuade lawmakers to make the area a public park. On March 1, 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the Yellowstone National Park Protection Act, establishing the first US national park. It set a major conservation precedent but forced Native Americans, who had lived in Yellowstone for thousands of years, to leave their home.

GETTY IMAGES

GREAT GEYSER
Old Faithful erupts about 20 times a day, sending water and steam about 100 to 180 feet in the air.
MORE MARVELS
In 1890, the US established Sequoia as its second national park and Yosemite as its third.

Wild wonders of Yellowstone

Wolf

By the 1940s, wolf packs were nearly extinct in Yellowstone. Wolves were reintroduced to the park in 1995. Today, at least 84 wolves live there.

Moose

The largest members of the deer family, moose are typically seen more often during the winter months in the park. Adult males have antlers for most of the year and can weigh up to 1,000 pounds.

national park

WOW! Yellowstone National Park is larger than the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined.

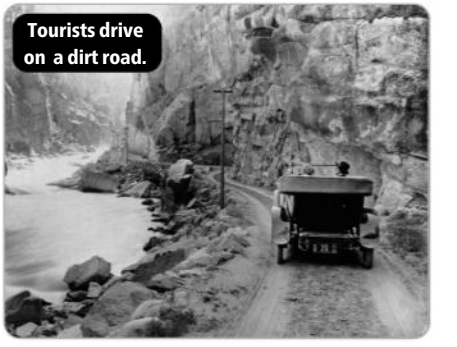
This photo shows a view of Yellowstone National Park and Yellowstone River. In the park's early years, promotional materials called it "Wonderland."

American kestrel

This bird of prey, the smallest type of falcon in North America, is considered native to the area. The American kestrel typically stays in more open areas of the park, where it can spot and attack prey.

Bison

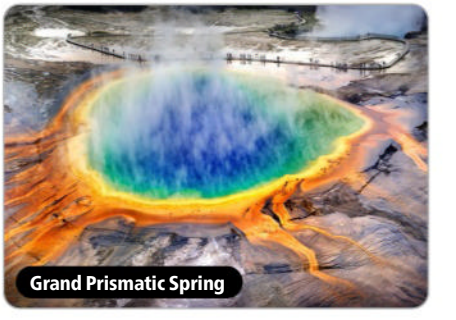
The park is home to the nation's largest population of bison, the biggest land animal in North America. They were once nearly extinct, but about 5,000 now make up the park's herd.



Tourists drive on a dirt road.

The park evolves

When Yellowstone first opened to the public, its natural resources were not well protected. This led to poaching and vandalism. Tourism exploded after the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883, and the US Army began to manage Yellowstone in 1886. When the National Park Service took over in 1918, Army veterans became the park's first official rangers. A law known as the Lacey Act of 1894 made it illegal to kill wildlife in the park. The Antiquities Act, passed in 1906, created protections for important cultural and scientific resources on federal lands. In 1915, private cars were officially permitted in the park. President Herbert Hoover expanded Yellowstone's boundaries in 1929 and 1932.



Grand Prismatic Spring

Yellowstone today

Nearly 5 million people visit Yellowstone each year to explore the park and its natural wonders. Those include Grand Prismatic Spring, which is Yellowstone's largest hot spring and famous around the world for its vibrant rainbow-like colors, which are created in part by bacteria. Throughout the park, there are more than 1,000 species of flowering plants, nearly 300 species of birds, and more than 60 species of mammals (see the box at left). Yellowstone has more than 1,100 miles of hiking trails, 11 campgrounds, and more than 2,000 established campsites, which require reservations in advance.

FUNNY CREATURES
Studies show that about 65 species of animals laugh in some way, like chuckling, grunting, panting, squealing, or chirping.

Orangutans are one of the great apes.

The evolution of laughter in apes

Humans belong to a group of primates called great apes, which also includes chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, and orangutans. All great apes have large bodies and big brains. Now scientists think they share another feature: rhythmic laughter. New research could shed light on the evolution (changes to a living thing over time) of laughter in great apes and human speech.

For the study, the researchers analyzed 140 recordings of the spontaneous laughter of four orangutans, two gorillas, three bonobos, four chimpanzees, and four human children. Some of the recordings were made decades ago by other scientists. The children were recorded recently. All the laughter was captured while the participants were playing or being tickled.

A chimpanzee

The team found that when they were being tickled, all the species laughed with evenly spaced rhythmic intervals. That means the time between each sound—whether it was a hoot or a ha—was always the same, like the ticking of a clock. (The intervals were inconsistent during play, likely because it can interrupt breath patterns.)

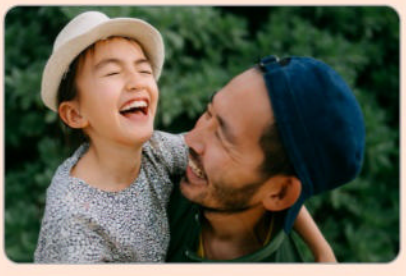
This rhythmic laughter in great apes was likely inherited from a shared common ancestor who lived 15 million years ago, the scientists said. There were some differences in the speed of the laughter, however. Humans laughed fastest, while chimps and bonobos, which are more closely related to humans, were the second fastest. Gorillas and orangutans, which are more distant relatives of humans, had the slowest laughs.

Out of all the great apes in the study, humans were the only ones who could laugh at different speeds and control that speed based on the circumstances. The team thinks this is because humans can adapt their laughter to the context in order to show different feelings or intentions.

"We can have a small, polite laugh in front of the Queen of England," said Chiara De Gregorio, an author of the study. But when we're with our friends, she added, "we laugh…in a different way."

Humans are also the only great apes who have the ability to speak. The sophisticated vocal control they showed during laughter may have been a key step toward the evolution of speech, the team said. The study was small, but further research could reveal more about the connection between laughter and the origins of human speech.

The joy of dad jokes



"So long, boiling water. You will be mist." "I'm worried about the calendar. Its days are numbered." "What's blue and smells like red paint? Blue paint." These silly "dad jokes" make you groan—but laugh too. According to a new study of 32,000 dad jokes, that's because the funniest ones follow specific patterns. Some are puns, while others reinterpret an expression or concept in a literal way or seem to be going one way but change course.

Whatever their structure, corny jokes bring people together. "Humor makes everyone feel…closer to the people they're with," said Paul Silvia, who conducted the research. "And maybe that's the true spirit of it." Other experts have said that dad jokes in particular can help parents and children bond.

New finding in search for life on Mars

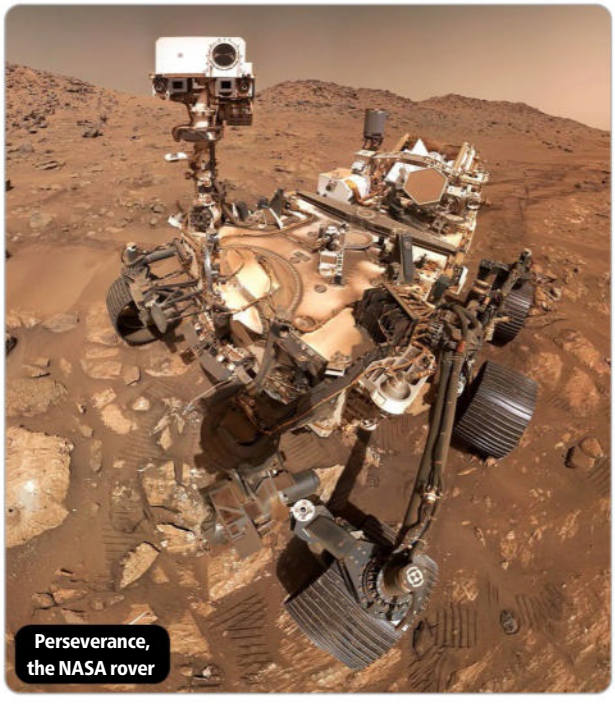
A robot roaming the surface of Mars found evidence that life may once have existed there. The Perseverance rover, which is operated by NASA (the US space agency), recently discovered carbon in rocks on the planet. Carbon is a chemical found in all living things and, along with water, is considered necessary for any life-form to exist.

Perseverance landed on Mars in 2021 to search for signs of past microbial life (an extremely small life-form, like bacteria). The rover is in an area called the Jezero crater, which scientists think was filled with water billions of years ago. The rocks were in a formation in the crater called Bright Angel, where Perseverance found other hints of past life in 2025.

ROLLING RESEARCH
NASA has put five rovers on Mars, starting with Sojourner in 1997. Two—Curiosity and Perseverance—are still active.

Perseverance used laser scanning technology to identify the chemicals and minerals in the rocks. The scans found a type of carbon called macromolecular carbon. "On Earth, [macromolecular carbon] is often found in extremely old rocks, and in some cases it is the only organic evidence of past microbial life," said Ashley Murphy, one of the study authors.

Macromolecular carbon can be left behind by a living thing as well as by other natural forces, like rushing water or a meteorite strike. The only way to confirm its source would be to conduct a close analysis of the rocks, but Perseverance doesn't have the equipment to do that. NASA could bring the rocks back to Earth for analysis but currently has no plans to do so.



Perseverance, the NASA rover

Millions of people play Wordle every day.

A science-backed Wordle strategy

Researchers at Binghamton University in New York used a math concept to solve the Wordle game with 99% accuracy. Instead of trying to guess the right answer, they ruled out as many wrong answers as possible. That reduced the number of possible right answers.

In Wordle, players have six tries to guess a five-letter word. If a letter is correct, the box it's in turns green. If the letter is in the word but not in the correct spot, the box turns yellow. If the letter isn't in the word, the box turns gray. Most players try to win by first guessing the letters that appear most often, like vowels. On average, people have a 90% success rate at guessing the word in six attempts.

The scientists took a different approach and concluded that the best guesses aren't the ones with the greatest chance of being correct. Instead, guesses that provide the most information about the word are the most useful in solving it.

AMAZING INVENTION

An arcade game that folds up

Playing the Swap Arcade

Full-size arcade games are fun to play, but the big machines take up a lot of space. A game-loving designer in California has found a way around that by designing a version that folds down into a small cabinet and tucks neatly against the wall.

Swap Arcade comes with a starter set of about 100 retro video games, and it's also compatible with platforms like Nintendo Switch, PS3 and PS2, and others. It comes in three different wood finishes, and a lower cabinet provides storage space for accessories.

NASA/JPL-CALTECH/MSSS; BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK; SWAP ARCADE; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

Photos of the week

Floral arrangement
Dancers in Poland perform at a festival celebrating the nation's cultural heritage.

Seeing double
In a garden in China, two lotus blossoms grow out of one stem.

GETTY IMAGES (6)

Photos of the week

Bold blossom
A daylily blooms in a garden in Canada.

Striped effect
This overhead shot shows terraced flower fields in China.

Colorful crafts
This photograph depicts woolen flowers made by local artisans in Nepal.

Soft spot
Raindrops rest on a Madagascar periwinkle in India.

WELCOME TO NEW YORK
This was the first time in 35 years that the US outdoor championships were held in New York City.

Noah Lyles

Historic US track and field nationals

From July 23 to July 26, the top runners, jumpers, and throwers from the US gathered at Icahn Stadium in New York City for the 2026 USA Track & Field Outdoor and Para National Championships. The meet marked the 150th anniversary of the first US Track and Field Championships (see box at right).

The competitors at the event included many Olympians and Paralympians. Noah Lyles, the reigning Olympic champion in the men's 100-meter race, won this year's national title in a world-leading 9.79 seconds, matching his personal best. In the women's 100-meters, Sha'Carri Richardson, who won silver in the event at the 2024 Olympics, captured the US title with a time of 10.77 seconds. Lyles and Richardson now have three national titles each in the event.

Brittni Mason

Lyles hoped to defend his national title in the 200-meters, but he got a cramp in the final and stopped racing. Garrett Kaalund won, finishing in 20.04 seconds. He also won the men's 110-meter hurdles. In the women's 200-meters, Melissa Jefferson-Wooden separated herself from the pack to secure a victory with a time of 21.69 seconds.

Two thrilling races were so close they ended in photo finishes. In the women's 1,500-meters, the top three runners were separated by hundredths of a second. Nikki Hiltz won a record eighth national title by a .04-second margin. In the men's 110-meter hurdles, reigning world champion Cordell Tinch won his first US title with a .004-second win over Bradley Franklin.

Other track winners included Cooper Lutkenhaus, age 17. He dominated in the men's 800-meters, winning by 1.07 seconds, the largest margin in a US men's outdoor 800-meter final since 2014. Field event winners included women's shot put world champion Chase Jackson, who threw more than one meter farther than her competitors.

In the para events, athletes with similar abilities competed against one another. The champions included world-record-holder Brittni Mason, who won the women's ambulatory 100-meter title in 12.16 seconds. Jaydin Blackwell broke his own world record in the men's T38 400-meter race. He became the first T38 athlete to break 48 seconds in the race, finishing with a time of 47.23 seconds.

Origin of the competition

The first-ever US national track and field championships were held in the Bronx, New York, a borough of New York City, on September 30, 1876. They were put on by the New York Athletic Club (NYAC), which had been holding track and field meets since 1870. The meet was officially known as "The 7th Annual Fall Games of the NYAC."

The event was held at Mott Haven Track (the same location as the 1883 meet pictured above), a site that no longer exists. Mott Haven's track was made of cinder, a material that is created by mixing ash, carbon, and rock or clay. Today, most cinder tracks have been replaced, and the surfaces are typically made from a type of rubber.

SPORTY FAMILY
AUSL player Ailana Agbayani is the daughter of former Major League Baseball player Benny Agbayani.

The Utah Talons

Utah wins repeat AUSL title

The second season of the AUSL (Athletes Unlimited Softball League), a pro women's softball league, concluded over the weekend of July 25 with the Utah Talons' successful defense of their 2025 title. At Davis Diamond in College Station, Texas, the Talons swept the Chicago Bandits by winning the first two games of a best-of-three championship series. The two teams also competed for last year's title.

The AUSL has six teams: the Talons, Bandits, Carolina Blaze, Portland Cascade, Oklahoma City Spark, and Texas Volts. The Spark and Cascade were new this season. Last year, the teams traveled the US and played at shared sites. This year, they hosted games in their own cities.

The Talons and Bandits each finished with a 16–9 record, but Utah claimed the number one seed (ranking) in the postseason and an automatic spot in the final because they beat the Bandits in the regular season. In a play-in game on July 23, the Bandits beat the third-place team, the Cascade, 6–5, in 11 innings to earn the other spot in the championship series. Ailana Agbayani delivered the game-winning hit for Chicago.

The Talons beat the Bandits, 2–1, in Game One of the championship series. Talons pitcher Georgina Corrick retired 15 of the last 16 hitters she faced. The next day, the Talons scored two runs in the top of the first inning on a home run from Jadelyn Allchin and eventually won, 6–1.

After the game, Allchin was named the AUSL Championship Most Valuable Player. She drove in three of her team's eight runs in the series while also providing outstanding defense.

COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Amber Friend**

Team: **The Bulldogs (Worcester Renegades Youth Street Hockey)**

"A few reasons why Coach Amber is great: Even though she coaches a lot of different teams, she gives her full focus to every single one. She doesn't expect us to be perfect. Instead, in each game she encourages us to be '1% better.' After each game, she names a 'player of the game' for the person who tried their hardest. She is the best coach we could ever wish for." Rafa, 9, and Rey, 8, Massachusetts

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

MORE BIG MOMENTS

Tadej Pogacar

CYCLING

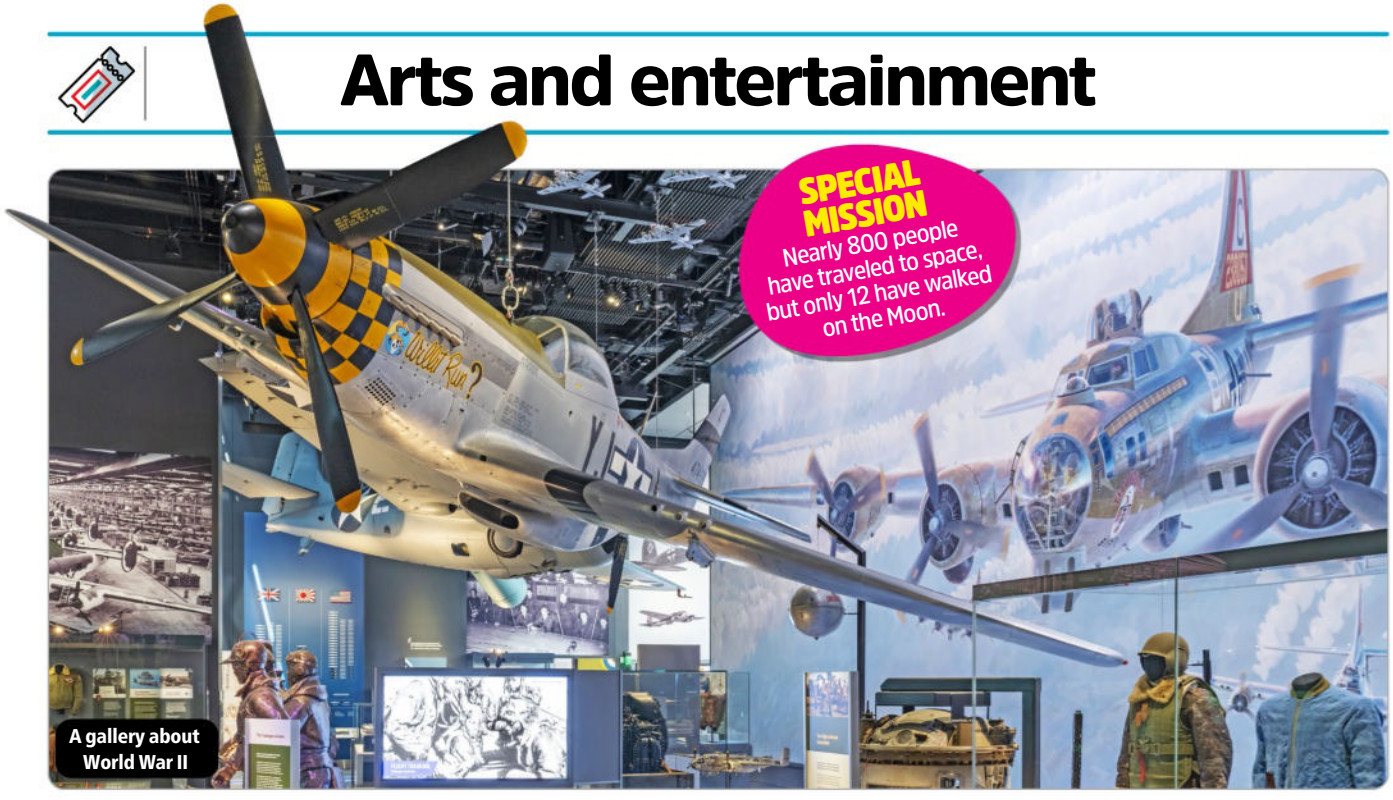
On July 26, Tadej Pogacar, a cyclist from Slovenia who races for UAE Team Emirates XRG, won the Tour de France, the most celebrated cycling race in the world. This is his fifth Tour title, and now he's tied with four other cyclists for the most wins in Tour history. The race began on July 4 and took place over 21 stages, covering about 2,000 miles in France and a small area of Spain. Pogacar won five stages, including a famous climb in Stage 19 that he had never won before. He crossed the finish line in Paris with a total time of 73 hours, 56 minutes, and 26 seconds. He was more than six minutes ahead of the next cyclist, Remco Evenepoel, who is from Belgium and rides for Red Bull-BORA-Hansgrohe.

The game

BASKETBALL

The WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association) All-Star Game was held in Chicago, Illinois, on July 25. This year's teams were drafted by WNBA legends Cynthia Cooper and Teresa Witherspoon. Among Team Spoon's players were A'ja Wilson, Jonquel Jones, and Caitlin Clark. Team Coop included Angel Reese, Marina Mabrey, and Paige Bueckers. Team Spoon won, 129–122, with Jones named Most Valuable Player. The day before, Azzi Fudd became the WNBA's first rookie winner of the 3-point contest. In Shooting Stars, a timed team shooting contest, the winning trio was retired icon Elena Delle Donne, current star Shakira Austin, and teen Jezelle "GG" Banks.

AUSL; GETTY IMAGES (2); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK ATHLETIC CLUB



A gallery about World War II

Updates at Air and Space Museum

Five renovated galleries have reopened and celebrate the past, present, and future.

This year, the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its building on the National Mall in Washington, DC. As part of the festivities, the museum recently opened five newly renovated galleries. They contain exhibitions filled with historic artifacts and artwork as well as interactive experiences.

The Air and Space Museum contains some of the most important flying machines in history. Its collection includes the Wright Flyer (the first successful powered airplane) and the Apollo 11 command module that carried astronauts to the Moon and back in 1969.

A new display of rockets

Renovations began in 2018, and galleries have been closed and reopened in stages. The museum will unveil its final two new areas this fall. At a July 1 ceremony, Ellen Stofan, a Smithsonian Institution executive, said the renovation is about making sure the museum continues "inspiring discovery, advancing science, and welcoming future generations of explorers and innovators."

One of the new galleries, Discovering Our Universe, traces how scientists, including astronomer Vera Rubin (1928–2016), have learned more about space through powerful telescopes and other instruments. In the Space Age Hall, meanwhile, RTX Living explores how space exploration has changed everyday life on Earth. Highlights include a Blue Origin New Shepard rocket booster and hardware connected to the Hubble Space Telescope.

Three new aviation galleries highlight the history and science of flight. World War II in the Air is filled with historic aircraft and tells the stories of the pilots, engineers, and factory workers whose ideas transformed aviation during the war (1939–1945). In the How Things Fly gallery, kids can experiment with a wind tunnel and climb inside the cockpit of a full-size Cessna Skyhawk. In the Flight and the Arts Center, visitors can see how artists have been inspired by flight and space through paintings, photography, and multimedia.

The director of the Air and Space Museum, Christopher Browne, said all of the objects on display are connected by one idea. "Everything in the museum is the product of human ingenuity," he told local reporters. "It's people designing, people who are curious, people exploring ideas and bringing them to fruition."

California space center highlight

Endeavour

In November, the Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center will open at the California Science Center in Los Angeles. In addition to having 100 hands-on exhibits, the new center will showcase NASA's Space Shuttle Endeavour in an upright, "ready to launch" position (above).

No retired shuttle has ever been displayed that way, and it will be the only place in the world where visitors can see a complete space shuttle stack: the orbiter, two solid rocket boosters, and an external fuel tank. "It's the most dramatic way to look at it," Jeffrey Rudolph, the California Science Center's president, told NBC4 News in Los Angeles. "It's a beautiful sight."

Endeavour flew 25 missions between 1992 and 2011, including the first servicing mission to the Hubble Space Telescope.

DANIEL SOÑE/SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM; MARK AVINO/SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM; MIKE KELLEY/CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER

FIRST COOKIES
During the 1920s and into the early 1930s, Girl Scouts baked and sold their own homemade sugar cookies.

Olive (left) and her friend Celia in *Cookie Queens*

Documentary about Girl Scouts

Each year, an estimated 200 million boxes of Girl Scout cookies are sold in the US. A new documentary film, *Cookie Queens*, follows four hardworking Girl Scouts from across the country as they try to reach their personal sales goals. The film arrives in theaters on August 7.

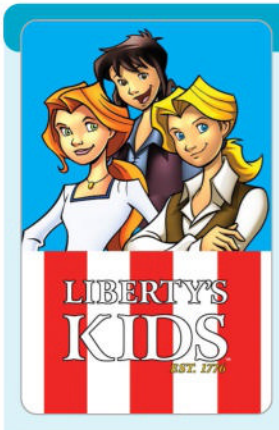
Cookie Queens was directed by Alysa Nahmias, a filmmaker and producer. She told *The Week Junior* that after she heard from a friend about "an amazing, smart Girl Scout" who sold him a lot of cookies, she started thinking about the girls and what they do. With the film, she said, "I wanted to show through the cookie sales how kids are learning about how the economy works, their place in it, and their value."

Nikki

When Nahmias was looking for girls to cover, she wanted to find devoted sellers who had "lots of imagination." Each scout faces a different sales challenge. Ara, age 5, is selling for the second time, while Shannon Elizabeth, age 8, and Nikki, age 9, are experienced sellers who want to earn big rewards. Olive, age 12, is under extra pressure to succeed because she holds her state's sales record. As much as she loves being a Girl Scout, however, she is torn about whether to continue selling in the future. She also feels it's unfair that Girl Scout troops receive a small fraction of the money from cookie sales, and she decides to speak up about it.

Nahmias hopes people who see the documentary will ask questions about what is fair, how businesses and other organizations operate, and how they can be changed. She would like the film to inspire people and send a message that "kids can be taken seriously...and have really brilliant ideas to contribute."

READER RECOMMENDS



Liberty's Kids *(Tubi, Roku Channel, Prime Video)*
"This funny and educational show is about the American Revolutionary War. It centers on James, a journalist's apprentice to Benjamin Franklin; Henri, a French boy who helps James; Moses, a free man who was formerly enslaved and also works for Benjamin Franklin; and Sarah, a British girl who helps James with his stories and keeps him and Henry out of trouble. Sarah is also searching for her father, a retired British soldier who hasn't been heard from in a long time. All my classmates and my teacher love it, and we love to sing along with the theme song." Ella, 10, New York

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

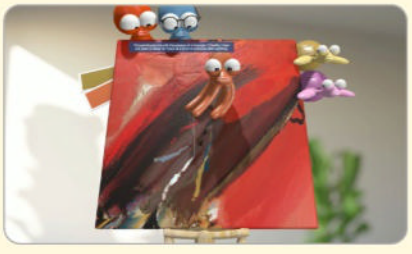
3 MORE PICKS TO ENJOY THIS WEEK

WATCH: SECRETS OF THE GREAT WHITE KILL

Discovery's annual Shark Week returns with a new set of specials. This one, premiering on July 31 at 8 p.m. ET, shows how great white sharks are highly intelligent hunters and use a range of tactics to catch their prey. Among the other specials is a K-pop-themed adventure. (Discovery Channel)

PLAY: MOOMINTROLL: WINTER'S WARMTH

This cozy adventure game is based on author Tove Jansson's beloved Moomin stories. In it, Moomintroll wakes up early from his hibernation and finds everything covered in snow. There are puzzles and quests, other Moomins, and new friends. (Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 5, PC)



CLICK: SPLASH CANVAS

Google Arts & Culture's new online experiment lets you create paintings with quirky sea creatures that act as your tools. They also playfully comment on your work and share fun facts about art history as you go. When you're done, you can choose a virtual location to display your piece and also download it. tinyurl.com/TWJUS-Splash

COURTESY OF ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS (2); PBS KIDS; COURTESY OF DISCOVERY; HYPER GAMES; GOOGLE ARTS & CULTURE

Book club

THIS WEEK'S BOOK

The Princess Diaries

By Meg Cabot, illustrated by Bethany Crandall

It's the late 1990s, and Mia is a typical high school freshman. She's doing fine in all her classes except algebra, which she's failing. It doesn't help that her mom is dating the algebra teacher. But one day her dad, who split up from her mom many years ago, shows up and has big news to tell her: She's the princess of Genovia (a fictional country in Europe).

Mia's father wants her to move to Genovia immediately, but she wants no part of it. She longs to join Greenpeace and go to Iceland to save the baby seals. Eventually, they reach a compromise: Mia will finish high school in New York City and go to Genovia on her school breaks.

Grandmère, Mia's grandmother, takes on the role of transforming Mia into a princess by giving her lessons in etiquette, fashion, and other subjects. She also leaks to the newspaper that Mia is a princess, causing a big uproar at school. When Mia gets asked to a dance by a popular boy she's had a crush on, is it because he's interested in her—or her royal title?

It's been more than 25 years since the publication of the original *Princess Diaries* book, and this full-color graphic novel introduces a new generation of readers to Mia's dilemmas. *Ages 12+*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB

Would you want to be in Mia's place? Explain.

Has Mia's new role as a princess added to her insecurities? How?

If you were Mia's friend, how would you have reacted to her news?

Were Mia's parents right to hide her royal heritage?

Would you have updated the story to take place today? Why or why not?

If you read the original book, what does the graphic novel contribute?

Find your next great read

If you liked…

War Games
By Alan Gratz
Set in Berlin in 1936, this novel follows Evie, a 13-year-old American gymnast competing in the Olympics who is recruited by a group of athletes to steal Nazi gold. Evie doesn't know who she can trust in this fast-paced drama. *Ages 10+*

You might like…

Westfallen
By Ann Brashares and Ben Brashares
An alternate-history novel that explores the consequences of a Nazi regime, *Westfallen* focuses on friends who find a magical radio that allows them to communicate with kids in 1944. They want to know what the future holds. *Ages 8–12*

Guess the book this quote comes from

"Whoever invented English should have learned to spell."

Hint: This novel in verse about a 10-year-old girl won a Newbery Honor and a National Book Award.

Answer: *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhhà Lai. Hà, a Vietnamese girl, is frustrated by the confusing rules of English while adjusting to her new life as a refugee in Alabama. The author translated her personal experiences into the story.

THIS WEEK'S AUTHOR

Meg Cabot

Best-selling author Meg Cabot has written more than 80 middle-grade, young adult, and adult novels. She is best known for her *Princess Diaries* series, published in 38 countries and adapted by Disney into multiple films.

Why do you think *The Princess Diaries* has such lasting appeal?

I think what other people like about it is that Mia is just a very relatable person. She makes a lot of mistakes, but she never gives up. She is always trying to do the right thing. And since Mia is a princess, the stakes are very high. When she messes up and she fails, it can have international implications.

What inspired the story?

People are always surprised that the answer is that my mom started dating one of my teachers. It was very traumatic for me because it was my teacher! However, I was also happy that my mom had found this person and they got together. I just started writing a story about a girl whose mom is dating her teacher, and it evolved into the princess stories.

Did you always want to be a writer?

I don't remember a time when I didn't want to be a writer. But I do remember thinking it was going to be really hard and maybe it wasn't a very realistic dream. I stopped telling people my dream, but I held onto it.

What do you love about writing for this age group?

They ask really good questions. But I also like to write about kids because kids are still kind of learning who they are and what their place is in the world, and to me, that's one of the most interesting stories there is.

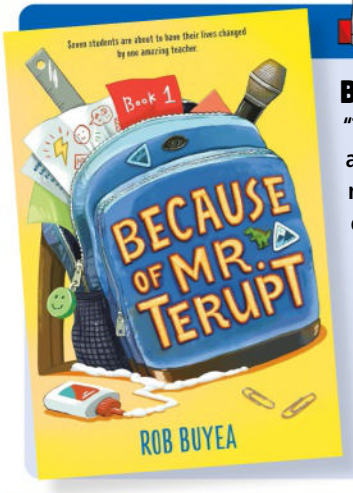
Did you dream of being a princess when you were growing up?

I was obsessed with *Star Wars* and Princess Leia. I wrote reams and reams of *Star Wars* fan fiction in which Princess Leia would show up to my school in the middle of class and take me out because I had to go on an important mission with the Rebel Alliance.

Favorite summer hobby?

I love swimming! Summer is the best time for hitting a pool, and I love to go to the beach.

BOOKS: COURTESY THE PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: COURTESY OF MEG CABOT; GETTY IMAGES



Reader recommends

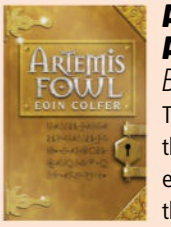
Because of Mr. Terupt *By Rob Buyea*

"This heartwarming novel is about a relationship between a teacher, Mr. Terupt, and his students. There are seven main students, and the book focuses on their impact on one another and Mr. Terupt. But after he has an accident, the students worry that their lives will go back to the way they were before. I read this book in school, and I loved it so much that I checked out the next two books in the series from the library. Once you start reading this book, you can't put it down!" Rose, 10, New York

Do you have a book to recommend? We want to hear about it! With an adult's help, please send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Special editions of favorite books

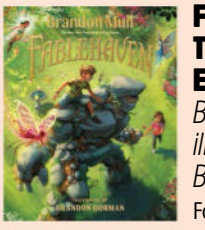
These classic fantasy and sci-fi novels are worth a second read.



Artemis Fowl 25th Anniversary Edition

By Eoin Colfer

This paperback edition of the first installment of the eight-book series features the original gold and holographic cover with new stained edges. A 12-year-old criminal genius discovers fairies and tries to steal their gold so he can fund an exploration to locate his missing father. But these aren't ordinary fairies—they're armed and dangerous. *Ages 10–14*



Fablehaven: The Illustrated Edition Volume 1

By Brandon Mull, illustrated by Brandon Dorman

For its 20th anniversary, the first book in this series has been reissued with more than 100 full-color illustrations of scheming witches, spiteful imps, and other characters. One of the greatest pages in the book captures the scene of Kendra flying with warrior fairies. *Ages 9+*

The Wild Robot Collector's Edition

By Peter Brown

Fans of this first book in the three-volume series will be thrilled with the 25+ pages of behind-the-scenes material, including some never-before-seen sketches. The cover image with shiny gold-foil stamping is just the beginning—there's stunning art inside too! A new note from the author and gorgeous gold gilded edges complete this special edition. *Ages 8–12*

Find out more about *The Week Junior* Book Club and check out our previous titles at kids.theweekjunior.com/bookclub.

WOW! Under dark skies, the Perseids meteor shower can produce more than 50 "shooting stars" per hour.

Watch a meteor shower

Get ready to look up and see a dazzling display in the night sky.

Meteor showers, otherwise known as "shooting stars," are exciting celestial spectacles to witness. This month you can view the Perseids (pronounced "per-see-ids"), an annual meteor shower that is one of the best of the year. Here's what to do.

Learn about what's happening

The Perseids meteor shower results from Earth passing through a trail of debris left behind by a comet. This year, it's happening now and is active through August 24. Peak visibility will be on the nights of August 12 and August 13 when there will be a new Moon. That means the sky will be at its darkest, making it ideal for viewing the shower. On those nights, you may see the Perseid shower—it may look like stars shooting through the sky, but it's actually tiny bits of dust, ice, and rock that burn up in Earth's atmosphere, creating bright streaks of light.

Set your clock for the show!

Pick your stargazing spot

You can spot the Perseids shower anytime from 10 p.m. onward in the US. However, it will be most visible in the hours before dawn. Ask a parent if you can set an alarm and get up together to watch this once-a-summer space show. Look for a viewing spot away from streetlights or any other artificial light, which will interfere with your ability to see what's in the sky. If you're in your backyard, turn off the lights in your home. You can use a flashlight or headlamp to get settled in your spot, then turn it off. You and your family could pitch a tent in your yard as a viewing spot or lie face-up on a blanket or a lounge chair and look skyward.

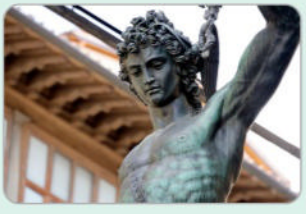
Be patient

It can take at least 20 minutes for your eyes to adjust to the dark, but then you'll start to notice twinkling stars and other activity in your peripheral vision (what you see out of the sides of your eyes). If it's a clear sky, you may spot the Big Dipper, the Little Dipper, and Polaris (also known as the North Star). You can also use a free app like Sky Guide or Sky Map to help locate them and other starry sights.

Enjoy the action

Perseid meteors move fast—up to 37 miles per second. The shower is known for producing vivid green fireballs caused by large chunks of debris colliding with Earth's atmosphere. Sit back, gaze into the sky, and take in the amazing show!

A hero among stars



Each meteor shower has what is called a radiant, the point where the meteors appear to come from. The Perseid meteor shower is named after the constellation Perseus—a mythical Greek god—because its radiant is located within this particular constellation.

According to Greek legend, Perseus discovered a beautiful princess named Andromeda who was about to be eaten by a sea monster. Perseus saved her and became a hero.

The Greek astronomer Ptolemy officially recorded the Perseus constellation in the 2nd century, and it remains one of 88 modern constellations that are recognized by the science community today.

DID YOU KNOW?
The Italian word frittata comes from *friggere*, which means "to fry."

WARNING!
Ask an adult's permission before using the oven.

Bake up a broccoli and spinach frittata

Ingredients

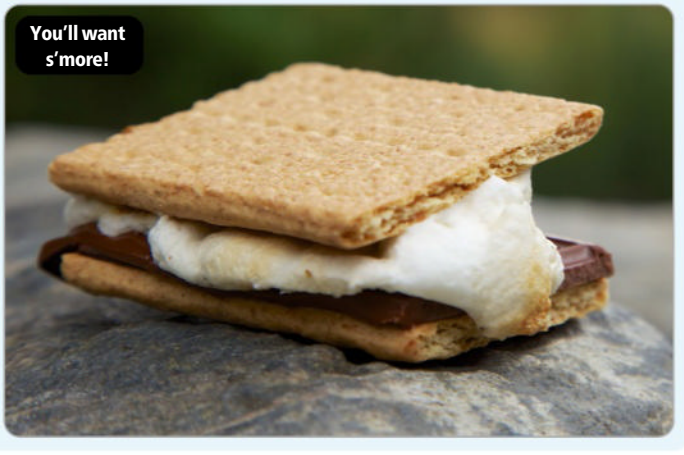
- 6 large eggs
- ½ cup heavy cream
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley, plus more for topping
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill, plus more for topping
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup chopped broccoli florets
- 1 handful of baby spinach, chopped
- 2 green onions, white and light green parts chopped
- 3 ounces herb cheese spread (such as Boursin)

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 400˚ F.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs and cream until uniform in color and consistency.
3. Season egg mixture with a generous pinch of salt and some freshly ground pepper. Stir in the parsley and dill. Set the mixture aside.
4. Heat the olive oil in an 8- to 10-inch oven-proof skillet over medium-high. Add the broccoli and cook, stirring, for about 3 minutes.
5. Stir in the baby spinach and green onions and cook, tossing, until the spinach is just wilted.
6. Spread veggies in the skillet in an even layer. Pour egg mixture over the top.
7. Drop dollops of the herb cheese over the egg mixture. Transfer the pan to the oven and cook until the eggs are set and golden brown, about 15 minutes.
8. Remove pan from oven. Sprinkle with more parsley and dill, if desired. Slice and serve. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

LIFE HACK MAKE TASTY S'MORES

Summer is the perfect time to make this treat. With adult supervision, gather around a campfire or firepit with your s'more supplies: a bag of marshmallows, a box of graham crackers, and a chocolate bar. Push a marshmallow onto the tip of a long stick or thin wooden dowel, then hold it over the fire. To prevent the marshmallow from burning, keep it from touching the flame. Rotate the stick so the marshmallow melts evenly all the way around. Once it's cooked the way you like it, remove the stick from the heat and place the marshmallow between two graham crackers and a piece of chocolate. Holding the crackers around the marshmallow, slide out your stick. Bite into your s'more and enjoy!

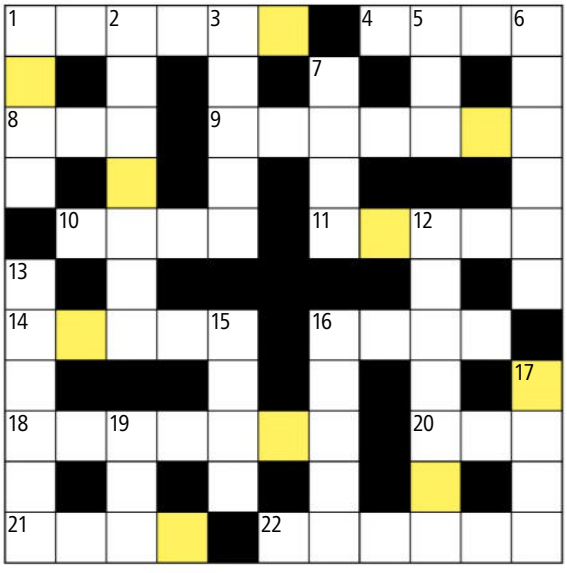


ERICA CLARK FOR STONE KITCHEN CREATIVE; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Keyword crossword

Once you have completed the crossword, transfer the letters in the yellow boxes, from top to bottom, into the boxes below to get the answer to the Keyword question. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)



ACROSS

1 Kind of puzzle made of interlocking pieces that form a picture
4 Crustacean that walks sideways
8 Family relatives
9 Yearly occurrence when day and night are almost the same length
10 Jedi master who said, "Size matters not. Look at me."
11 It protects your clothing from kitchen splatters
14 Walk out of a room or building
16 Radiate a soft light in the dark
18 Error
20 Number of people in a duet
21 Twinkling object in the night sky
22 Word that can follow solar or nuclear

DOWN

1 Funny story or riddle
2 Boat type associated with Venice, Italy
3 Large indoor venue for a sports or music event
5 Participate in a marathon
6 Sport that takes place in a square "ring"
7 Dance you might see performed in Hawaii
12 Farm's "alarm clock"
13 Fireplace sight
15 Long and important test
16 Little ___ men (visitors from outer space)
17 Snug, warm, and comfortable
19 Ocean

Keyword question: What kind of bird has a tail so stiff that it's used like a third leg for support?

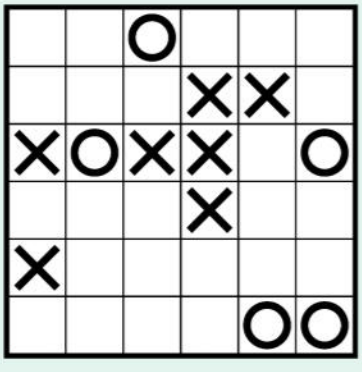
THREE FOR ALL

Sort this list into three familiar three-part phrases, like SALT LAKE CITY, HOT-AIR BALLOON, or FLAG FOOTBALL. Compound words like FOOTBALL are allowed.

OF WORD MY CHEEK IN TONGUE LIPS MOUTH READ

Hit or miss

Place an X or O in each empty square so there are never more than three X's or O's together in a row, column, or diagonal. Hint: If you find three in a row of one letter, you can put the other letter into the spaces at either end.



CODE CRACKER

In this coded list of things associated with pirates, every letter has been replaced with a substitute. The same substitutions are used throughout the list. Hint: Every X here is an uncoded H. Use the letter patterns you find to crack the code.

T D T J F G V X

J F Q Q B G

"D B X B X B"

Spot the difference

These two pictures of mail trucks appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Keyword crossword hint: The answer to 13-Down begins with F.

It's soup-er flavorful!

A soup that's always simmering

A restaurant in Thailand called Wattana Panich has kept one pot of broth simmering for more than 52 years. The eatery has been owned by the same family for generations and is famous for its beef noodle soup, which is made with broth from the giant pot that's been sitting on the stove since 1974. Each day, the chef adds fresh beef, herbs, and spices to the boiling liquid. Over time, this has created an extra-rich, complex flavor. One customer told *The Wall Street Journal*, "It's insane how good it tastes."

May the best goat win.

An eating competition for goats

Three champion chompers faced off in New York City at Goatham 2026: The Great Goat Graze-Off. According to organizers, this annual event is the only professional eating contest for goats. In front of adoring human fans, the animals compete to devour a bunch of weeds in the fastest time. This year, defending champion Mallomar emerged victorious over fan-favorite Romeo and rookie Big Buddy. The goats will now spend 10 weeks in Riverside Park, munching on invasive plants like mugwort that need to be removed.

They were squatters.

Crabs invade garden shed

A man in the UK was in for a "clawsome" surprise when he returned from a vacation to find seven crabs scuttling around his backyard shed—even though he lives more than 50 miles from the ocean. Michael Birch was not the only resident with unexpected visitors, as other people in the area also reported sightings of the wandering crustaceans. Experts think someone caught the shore crabs during a trip to the beach and brought them inland. "Now, somehow, they're in my garden," Birch told a local radio station.

Edible, spreadable artwork

There's a sticky new exhibit at a Dutch museum. To honor the artist Wim T. Schippers, who died in June, a 270-square-foot area of the building's floor has been covered with peanut butter. It's a tribute to one of Schippers' most famous creations, *Pindakaasvloer* (Peanut Butter Floor), which debuted in 1969 as part of his Floor Covering Series. To re-create it, museum staff spread more than 800 pounds of peanut butter in a hexagon shape. That's enough for 15,000 sandwiches. Is this nutty story true, or are we spreading lies?*

*Real! The Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen re-created Schippers' work to demonstrate how he challenged conventional ideas about art. It took workers several days to smear a 0.8-inch-thick layer of peanut butter on the floor.

IG/@MR.ROO89; RIVERSIDE PARK NYC; ADOBE STOCK (5); GETTY IMAGES (2); RAAF BLANKER/MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

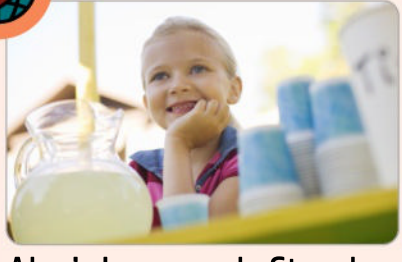
Editor's note

When our editorial team read about the massive effort to relocate 30 beluga whales from a marine park in Canada to new homes, we knew our readers would want to know about it (p2).

So we made it our top news story this week, and we hope you enjoy reading it. It's incredible to me that such large animals (weighing up to 3,500 pounds each!) were moved safely with a sling, a crane, and special water tanks via truck and plane to the US. It took experienced whale specialists, careful planning, and international cooperation to transport the first six belugas—and it's not surprising that the workers at Shedd Aquarium and SeaWorld San Antonio (where these whales now live) became emotional when they arrived. Now there are 24 more whales to transport. I hope they, and all the animals that had been living at the Canadian marine park, will be safely relocated and will adjust well to their new surroundings.

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

CHARITY OF THE WEEK



Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation

This group supports children who have cancer. It was founded in 2005 after Alex, a 4-year-old fighting the disease, started a lemonade stand to raise money to help other kids with cancer. The organization assists families through their child's treatment, raises awareness of pediatric cancers, and holds fundraisers. Find out more at alexslemonade.org.

CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

▲ **"I made the smoothie, and it tasted so yummy!"** Anya, 9, California

▼ **"I made the snack board for a party, and it was empty in minutes."** Avani, 11, Alabama

▲ **"Thanks for the great recipe. It was tasty!"** James, 8, Virginia

◀ **"The American flag food tray was a hit!"** Jana, 10, California

▶ **"I loved making red, white, and blue treats."** Aarav, 8, Minnesota

▶ **"We made the recipe as an appetizer on July Fourth, which also happens to be my birthday!"** Emmalyn, 10, Arizona

▲ **"We made the smoothie to celebrate the Fourth of July. It was delicious!"** Anya,11, and Kunal, 9, Texas

THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com.*

Your turn

Thank you to everyone who sent us photos of the red, white, and blue snack board and smoothies they made using our recipes from Issue 324. We enjoyed every submission, and we appreciated reading about how you celebrated the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding. You can find the recipes at kids.theweekjunior.com/activities.

▲ **"We made the snack board for a Fourth of July party."** Nikhil, 10, and Arjun, 2, New Jersey

▲ **"We loved making the smoothies!"** Charlie, 9, and Ashley, 11, Pennsylvania

▶ **"I made the stars and stripes snack board."** Dylan, 12, Florida

▼ **"I made the Fourth of July snack tray for our celebration."** Lia, 9, California

▶ **"Happy 250th birthday, America!"** Ameya, 11, Michigan

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

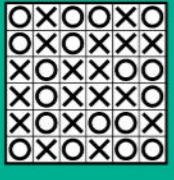
Puzzle answers (from page 26)

J	I	G	S	A	W	■	C	R	A	B
O	■	O	■	R	■	H	■	U	■	O
K	I	N	■	E	Q	U	I	N	O	X
E	■	D	■	N	■	L	■	■	■	I
■	Y	O	D	A	■	A	P	R	O	N
F	■	L	■	■	■	■	■	O	■	G
L	E	A	V	E	■	G	L	O	W	■
A	■	■	■	X	■	R	■	S	■	C
M	I	S	T	A	K	E	■	T	W	O
E	■	E	■	M	■	E	■	E	■	Z
S	T	A	R	■	E	N	E	R	G	Y

Keyword answer: woodpecker

Code cracker
eye patch
parrot
"yo ho ho"

Three for all
word of mouth
tongue-in-cheek
read my lips



Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** a) Carbon **2** Dua Lipa **3** b) 50th **4** True **5** b) Four **6** c) Wyoming **7** True **8** Six **9** a) *Black Panther* **10** False. Dogs usually show an interest but cats do not. **11** Girl Scouts **12** c) 800-meters **13** False. They found that all great apes produce rhythmic laughter. **14** Genovia **15** b) Mallomar

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 NASA's Perseverance rover recently discovered traces of which chemical in rocks on Mars?

a) Carbon b) Calcium c) Cobalt

a☐ b☐ c☐

2 Which pop star opened the new Manifesto Library in Portugal?

3 The Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum building on the National Mall is celebrating what anniversary?

a) 25th b) 50th c) 75th

a☐ b☐ c☐

4 True or false? The world's largest protected marine area is in the territory of French Polynesia.

True☐ False☐

5 Basketball star LeBron James has won how many NBA championships?

a) Three b) Four c) Five

a☐ b☐ c☐

6 About 96% of Yellowstone National Park is located in which US state?

a) Idaho b) Montana

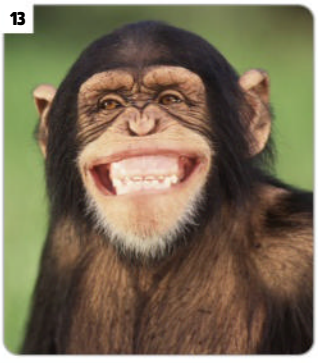
c) Wyoming

a☐ b☐ c☐

7 True or false? The Utah Talons recently won the Athletes Unlimited Softball League title for the second straight year.

True☐ False☐

8 How many beluga whales were relocated from Marineland park in Canada to the US on July 21?



ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

9 David Jonsson will be the new lead actor in which Marvel Studios superhero franchise?

a) *Black Panther*

b) *Captain America*

c) *Iron Man*

a☐ b☐ c☐

10 True or false? A recent study found that cats usually show an interest in helping humans, but dogs do not.

True☐ False☐

11 The *Cookie Queens* documentary follows four hardworking members of what youth organization?

12 Teenage track star Cooper Lutkenhaus won which event at the recent US national championships?

a) 100-meters

b) 200-meters

c) 800-meters

a☐ b☐ c☐

13 True or false? Scientists found that humans are the only great apes capable of producing rhythmic laughter.

True☐ False☐

14 In the graphic novel *The Princess Diaries*, Mia is the princess of what fictional country?

15 Which goat won the 2026 Great Goat Graze-Off in New York City?

a) Big Buddy

b) Mallomar

c) Romeo

a☐ b☐ c☐

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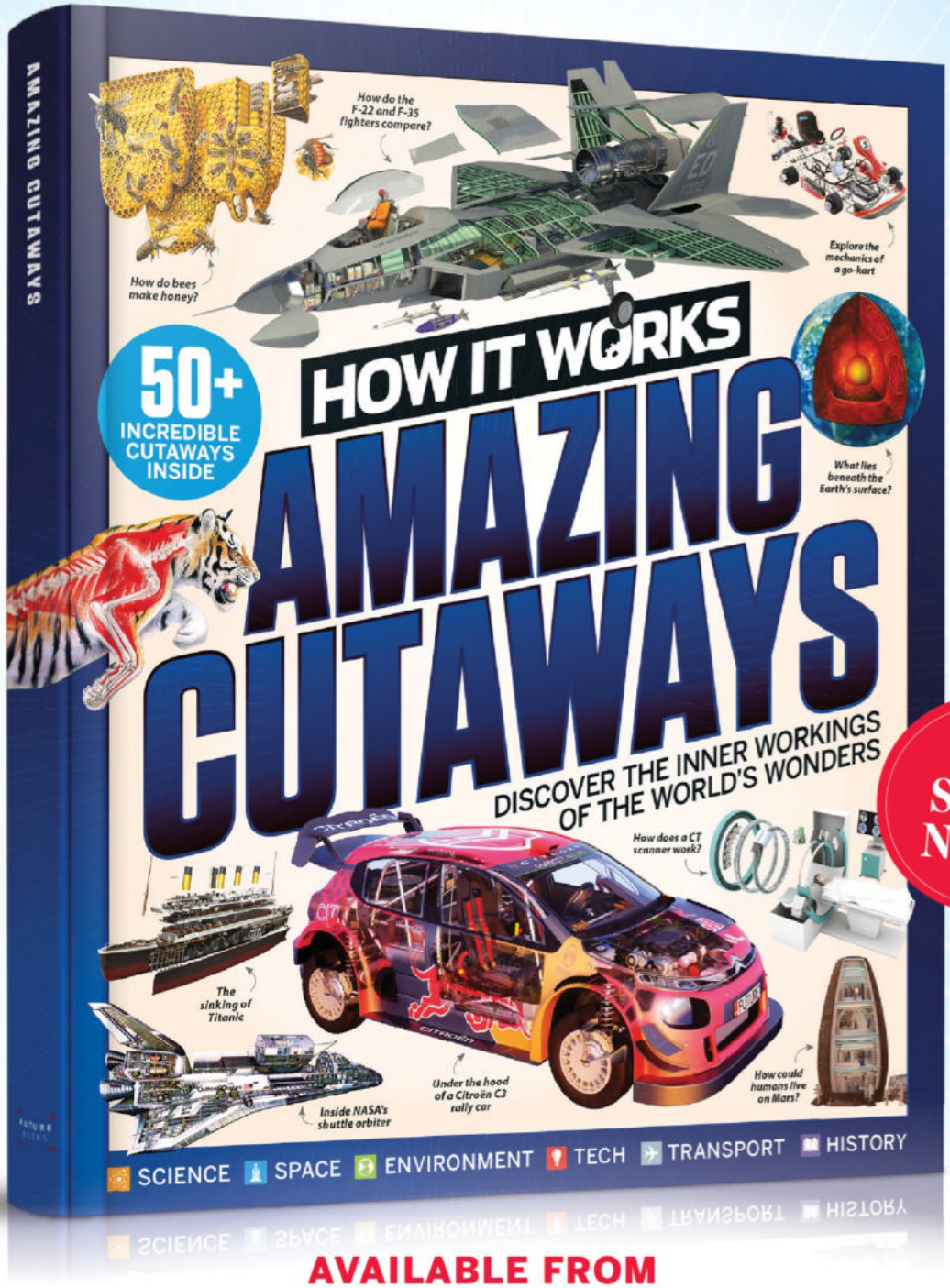
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